



66th 'Alice' Cuts Annual Christmas Tree in Clark County

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NEILLSVILLE – Kristin Olson, 66th Alice in Dairyland, kicked off the holiday season Friday by cutting the annual Christmas tree provided this year by the R&S Tree Farm in Neillsville.

The Robert Knoop family, of R&S Tree Farm, invited 4th graders from Neillsville Elementary to join in the festivities. Students learned from Robert Knoop about the history of the tree farm, which has been in operation for over fifty years. Knoop also shared with visitors the many steps that go into growing a Christmas tree. If cared for properly, a typical tree will grow approximately one foot per year; that means it takes about 8 years to grow an 8-foot tree.



Before cutting the Christmas tree, Olson spoke about the importance of Christmas trees to Wisconsin agriculture. Wisconsin harvests 1.8 million Christmas trees each year, ranking the state 5th in the nation for the number of trees harvested. Purchasing Wisconsin-grown Christmas trees not only supports local tree farmers, but helps them provide habitats for animals and maintain a beautiful environment while supporting Wisconsin's economy, too.

"Christmas tree growers around the state have been working all year getting their trees ready for this season; they love being able to provide a real tree for families to enjoy," said Cheryl Nicholson, Executive Secretary of the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association.

"The wonderful fragrance of the tree can bring back Christmas memories of the past," Nicholson added. "And for those who never had a real tree, they should experience it this year. Just like a bouquet of fresh flowers brightens their day, a fresh tree will brighten their holidays. They won't regret getting one!"

Christmas tree producers make it easy to find just the right tree by offering both cut-your-own and pre-cut trees. Start family traditions of your own this holiday season, and buy a Wisconsin-grown tree. To find one of Wisconsin's more than 400 licensed Christmas tree growers in your neighborhood, visit www.christmastrees-wi.org today.

The Alice in Dairyland Christmas tree cutting was held in Clark County, which will host the 67th Alice in Dairyland finals on May 15-17. The county held the inaugural tree cutting ceremony in 2000, which was also the last time the county hosted the Alice in Dairyland finals. The Christmas tree cutting tradition has been alive and well ever since.

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Alice in Dairyland is Wisconsin's agriculture ambassador. She travels over 40,000 miles each year to spread the word about our diverse agriculture industry. Alice in Dairyland can be reached by writing to Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), 2811 Agriculture Drive, PO Box 8911, Madison, WI 53718. You can schedule Alice for an upcoming event by contacting the Alice in Dairyland Program at 608.224.5115 or by e-mail at DATCPAlice@wisconsin.gov. To learn more about Wisconsin's \$59 billion agricultural industry visit her travel blog at www.wisconsinagconnection.com/alice, like her on Facebook (Alice in Dairyland) or follow on Twitter (Alice_Dairyland).